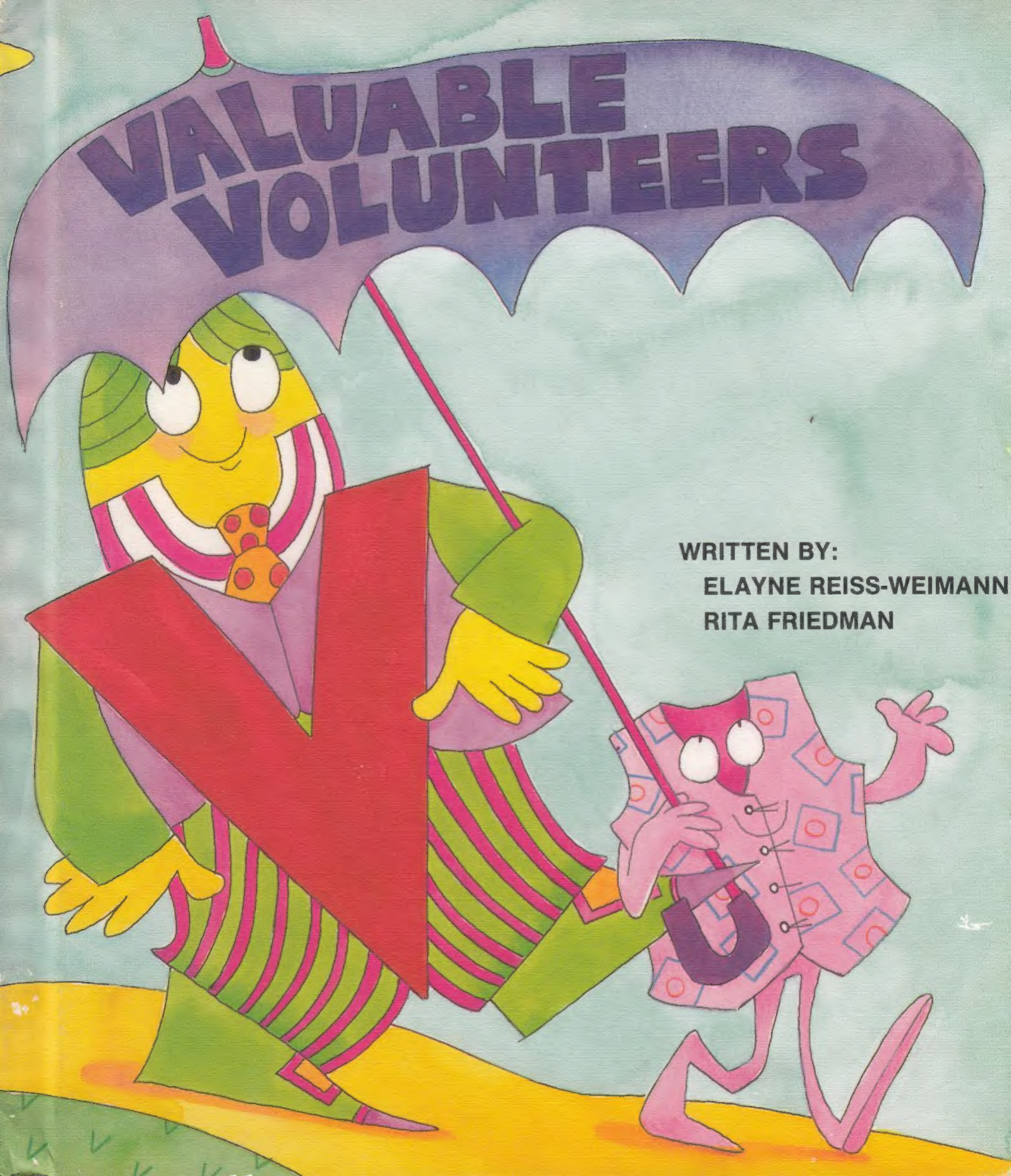


VALUABLE VOLUNTEERS

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RITA FRIEDMAN



Mr. V uses his time to help people.
He visits sick people at the hospital.
He reads stories to the children at school.
“Volunteering makes other people feel good,
and that makes me happy,” says Mr. V.



One day, Mr. V volunteers to help seat people at a violin concert.

Mr. V's vests go to the concert hall with him.

"Vivian Van Vyke, the violin player, has volunteered to give a free concert," says Mr. V. When Miss Van Vyke walks on stage the vests hear the audience cheer and cheer.

"Vivian Van Vyke is a very famous violin virtuoso," explains Mr. V.



“What’s a virtuos . . . virtuos . . . ?” ask the vests.

“Virtuoso,” says Mr. V.

“A virtuoso is a person who is the very best at something,” explains Mr. V.

“We want to be violin virtuos . . . virtuos . . . ,” say the vests.

“Virtuosos,” says Mr. V.

“It’s not easy to be the best at something,” he says.

“Being the best will make us feel good about ourselves,” say the vests.

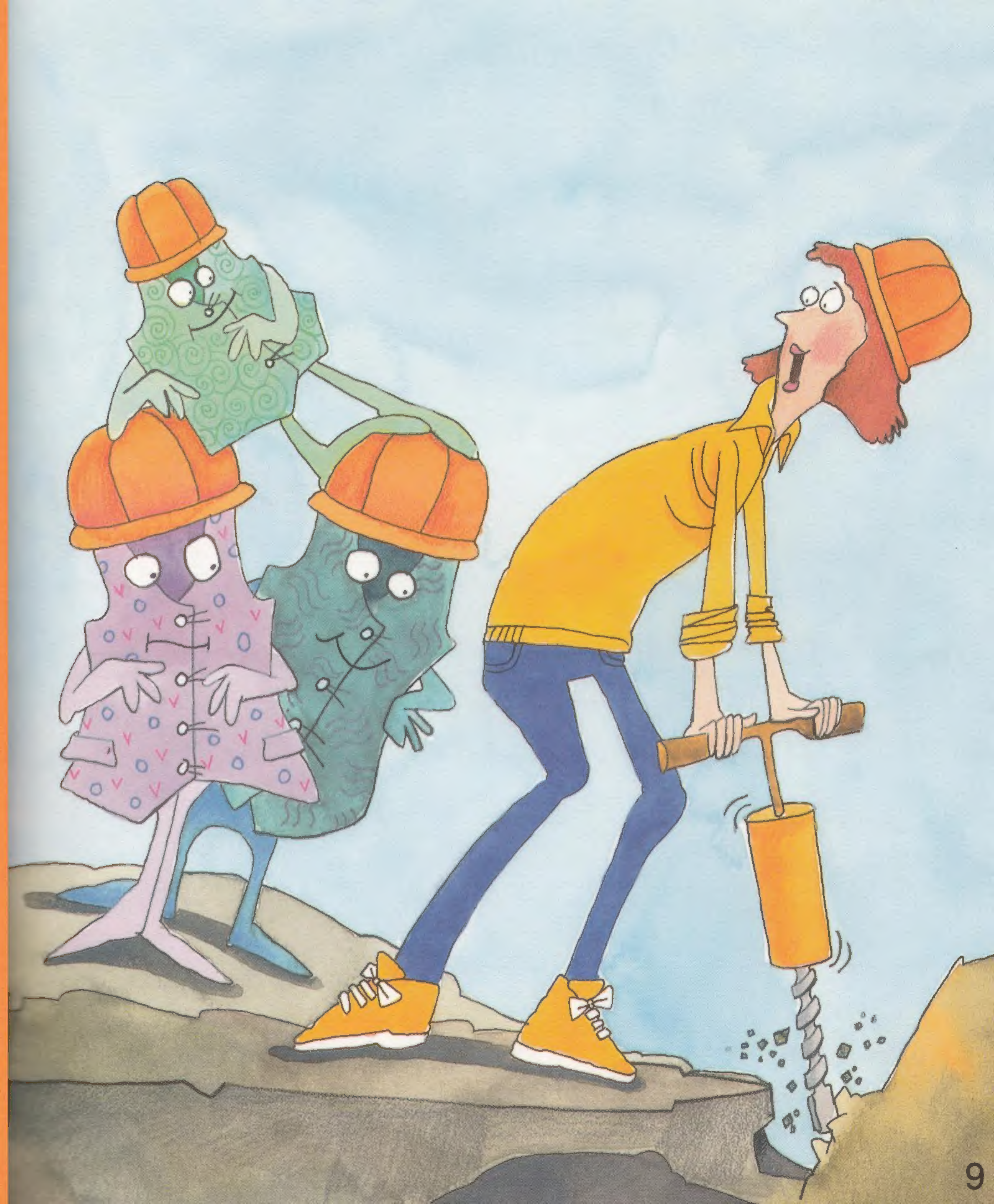
“We want to be violin virtuosos.”



The vests take violin lessons.
They practice and practice.
But they do not learn to play the violin very well.
“We only make screeching sounds,” say the vests.
“Not one of us sounds like a violin virtuoso.”
“Letter People Land needs volunteers to help
fix the school road,” says Mr. V.
“Why don’t you try being volunteer virtuosos?” he asks.
“We’ll try,” say the vests.



Mr. V introduces the vests to Vanna Vickers.
“I am so glad you are volunteering
to help with the road,” she says.
She gives each vest a hard hat to wear.
“Let me show you how to use a jackhammer,”
says Vanna Vickers.
“A jackhammer is a special tool
that breaks up hard rocks.”
The vests watch Vanna Vickers use the jackhammer. .



“The jackhammers keep moving and shaking,”
say the vests.

“That’s what a jackhammer does—it vibrates,”
says Vanna Vickers.

“How will we hold on to the jackhammers?”
ask the vests.

“Don’t worry, you’ll learn.”

The vests try to use the jackhammers.

The jackhammers shake and shake.

The vests cannot hold on to them.

They return their hard hats and go home.



“We tried to be volunteers,” say the vests to Mr. V,
“but we couldn’t hold on to the jackhammers.
We were not good volunteers.”
“That was not the right job for you,” says Mr. V.
“There are other jobs for which you can volunteer.”
“We’ll try,” say the vests.



Mr. V thinks of a different way the vests can help others.

“Very soon it will be Election Day,” says Mr. V.

“It is very important for everyone who is old enough to vote.”

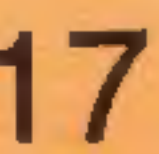
“How can we help?” ask the vests.

“You can volunteer to remind voters to vote,” explains Mr. V.

“We will be good at that job,” smile the vests.



"I'll vote if the weather is good,
and I can get to the voting place," say others.



The vests are very unhappy.
“We can’t do this job either,” they say.
“People won’t promise to vote.
How will we ever be volunteer virtuosos?
Maybe we should volunteer to do something else.”
“You can’t give up every time it’s a little hard
to do something,” says Mr. V.
“Let’s talk and think together.
What can we do to get people to vote?”



Mr. V and the vests think for a while.

“We can have a meeting at Town Hall,” say the vests.

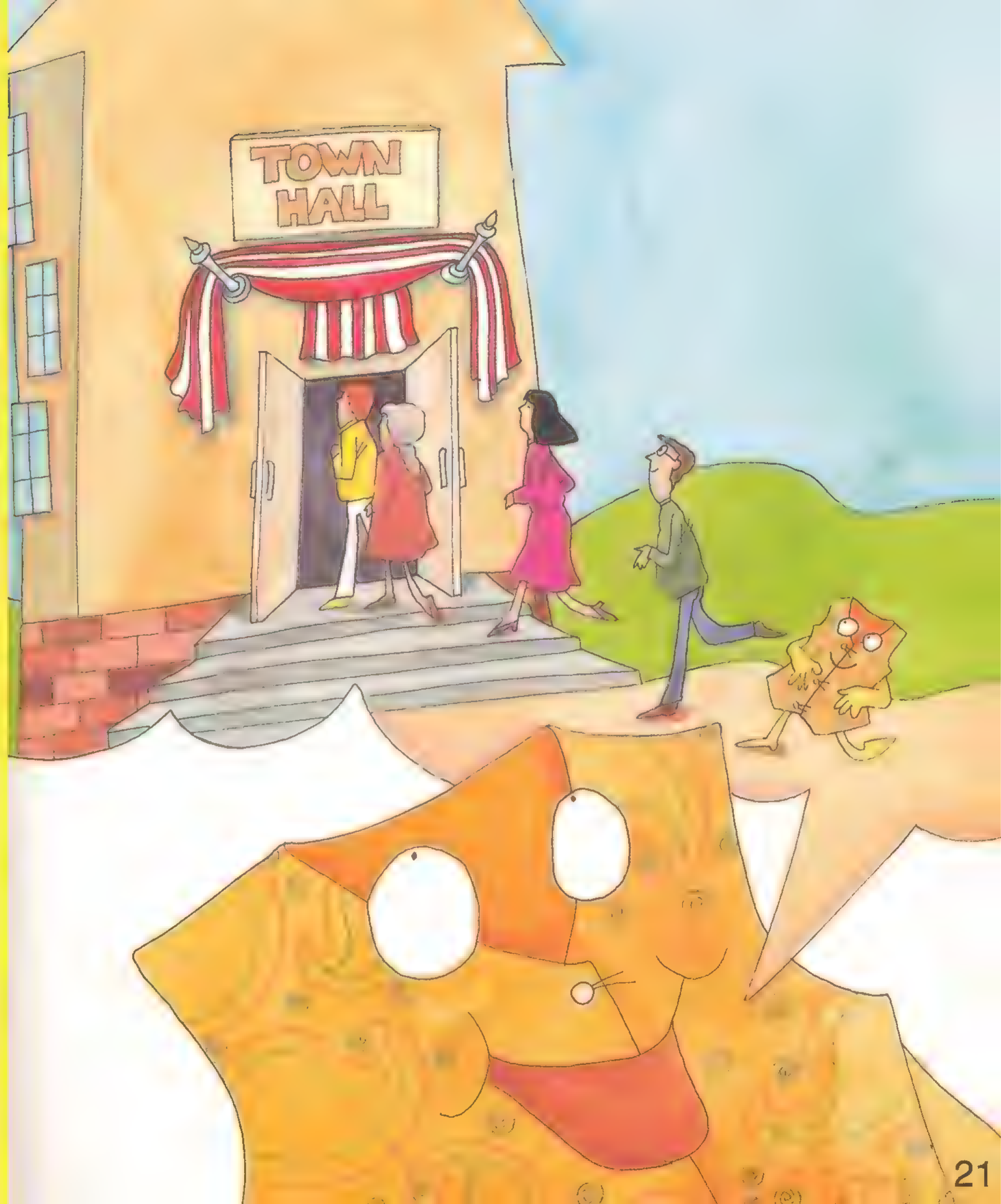
“Everyone who wants to be elected can talk to the voters.”

“The voters can listen and ask questions,” says Mr. V.

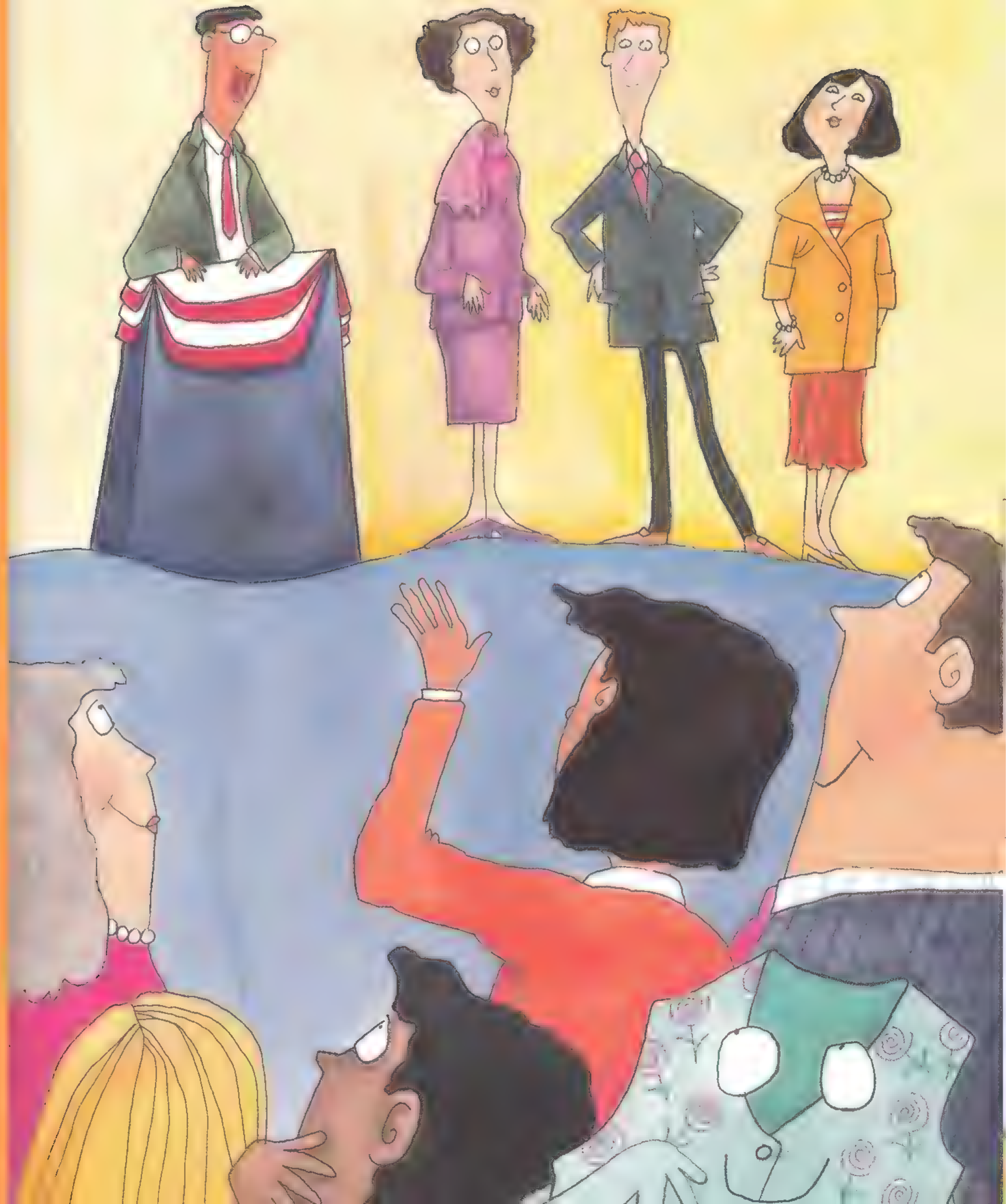
“Then they can decide for whom they want to vote.”

“We’ll volunteer to tell everyone about the meeting,” say the vests.

“Maybe this time we’ll be volunteer virtuosos.”



The meeting is a great success.
Town Hall is filled with voters.
The vests volunteer to seat everyone.
The people listen.
They ask questions.
“We will vote on Election Day,” they say.



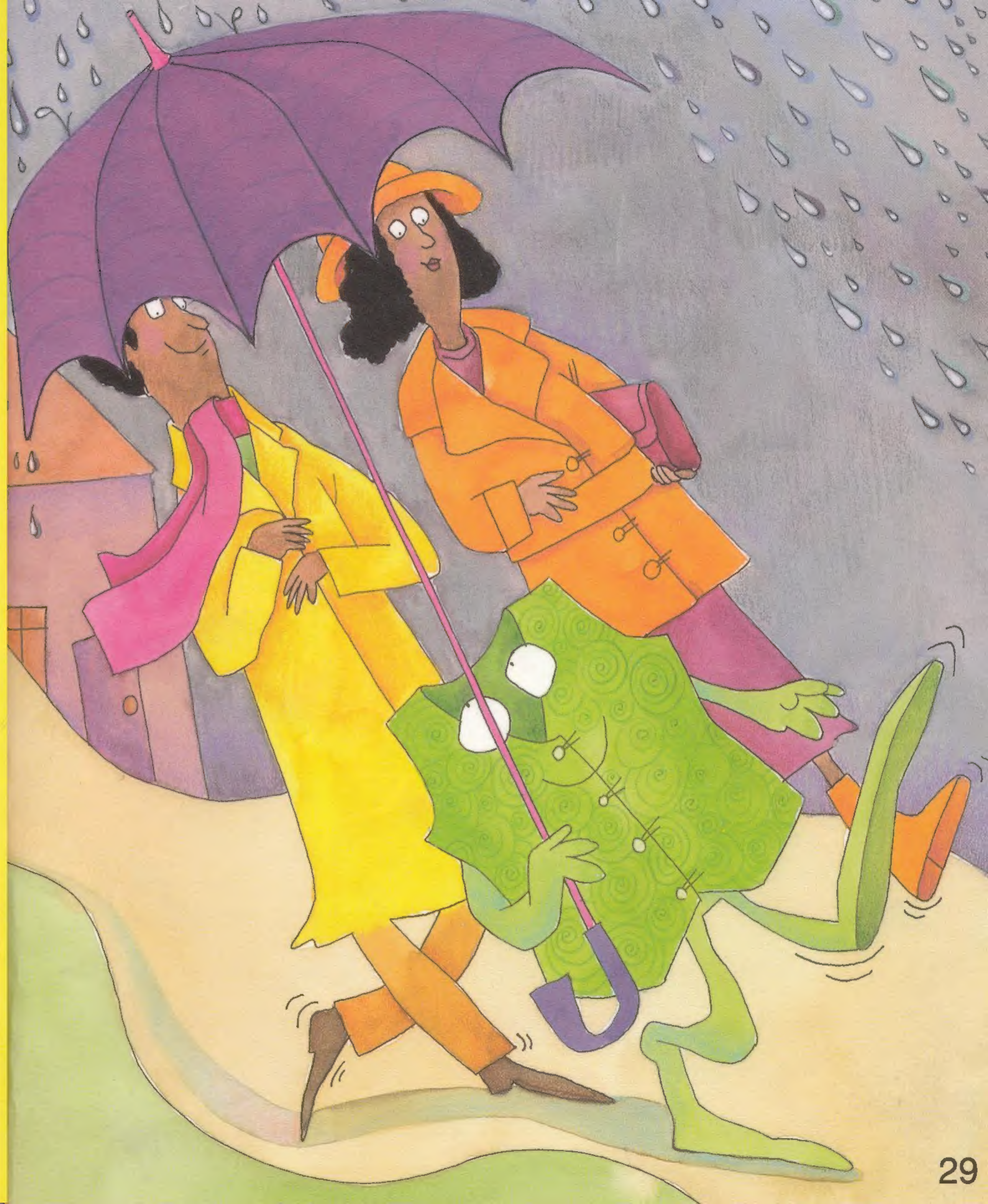
The vests awaken very early on Election Day.
They telephone person after person.
“Please be sure you go to your voting place
to vote,” say the vests.
“We will vote,” say the people.
Suddenly it starts raining and gets very cold.
The roads become icy.
People say, “We want to vote,
but we cannot get to our voting places.”



This time the vests do not give up.
They talk and think with Mr. V.
They decide on a plan.
Mr. V drives the vests to the umbrella shop.
They buy great big violet-colored umbrellas.
Then they get into Mr. V's violet-colored van.
The violet van drives from house to house.
The vests go from door to door
with their violet umbrellas.



The vests help people get into the violet van.
Mr. V drives slowly and carefully to the voting places.
Mr. V and the vests work until everyone has voted.
At the end of the day the vests are very tired,
but very happy.
“You did a very, very good job,” says Mr. V.
The vests smile.
“Are we volunteer virtuosos now?” they ask.
“Yes, you are!” says Mr. V.





All year the vests are valuable volunteers.
And on the next Election Day, voters walk under
the violet umbrellas even though it isn't raining.
“We’re proud to walk with volunteer virtuosos,”
they say.

The vests are proud, too.